

OPERATIONS OF THE MINT—1835.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A Report of the Operations of the Mint for the year 1835.

JANUARY 21, 1836.

Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.

WASHINGTON, *January 20, 1836.*

SIR: I herewith transmit to the House of Representatives a report from the Director of the Mint, exhibiting the operations of that institution during the year 1835.

The report contains also some very useful suggestions as to certain changes in the laws connected with our coinage, and with that establishment, which are recommended to your early and careful attention.

Beside some remarks in it on the progress made in the erection of branch mints, and procuring machinery therefor, I enclose a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, submitting more detailed statements as to the new buildings from each of the agents appointed to superintend their erection.

ANDREW JACKSON.

HON. JAMES K. POLK,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES,

Philadelphia, January 1, 1836.

SIR: In compliance with the regulations of the Government, I have now the honor of submitting to you a report of the general transactions of the Mint, during the year which has just closed.

The coinage executed during that period has amounted to \$5,668,667, comprising \$2,186,175 in gold coins, \$3,443,003 in silver coins, and \$39,489 in copper coins, and composed of 15,996,342 pieces of coin. The details are presented in schedule A.

The deposits of gold within the year have amounted, in round numbers,

to \$1,845,000, of which \$698,000 was from bullion derived from the gold mines in the United States. (Schedules B and C.)

The amount of gold bullion in our vaults, at the end of the year, is \$77,880, all of which has been deposited since the 30th of November. The amount of silver bullion in our vaults is \$780,600, all of which has been deposited since the 31st of October.

The amount of gold coinage is less than that of 1834 by \$1,768,095. This difference has arisen, in part, from the recoinage of American gold of the former ratio, which amounted, in 1834, to \$1,067,000, and in 1835, to only \$160,000.

The silver and the copper coinages are greater than in any former year, and the whole number of pieces struck exceeds that in any former year by more than four millions.

In consequence of an unusual demand for small silver coins, the amount of this coinage, for the last year year, has been so great as nearly to equal the whole of that for the four years preceding.

Measures have been taken recently, and are now in progress, for introducing improvements in the processes and machinery of the Mint, by which it is believed that the efficiency of the establishment may be much increased. Heretofore the milling and coining have been done exclusively by human labor. New machines are nearly completed by which these operations will be executed with steam power. Changes are about to be made in the melting and refining department, by which the processes will be performed upon a greatly enlarged scale, and by improved methods. The humid assay for silver has been successfully introduced, and new arrangements for the assay by fire are about to be commenced.

I am confident that, when the intended changes shall be completed, the capabilities of the Mint will be doubled, and the delay in the coinage, which is now a subject of just complaint, may be proportionally reduced. It may, indeed, be entirely removed, by the adoption of a measure to which I beg leave to ask your attention. In the 14th section of the act of April 2, 1792, for the organization of the Mint, it is made the duty of the Secretary of the Treasury to furnish the Mint, from time to time, with sums of money for the purpose of making payments promptly to persons bringing bullion. Such a provision was calculated to be of great benefit. By placing a supply of bullion in our hands, it would enable us to go forward regularly with the coinage, without being, as at present, sometimes interrupted for want of deposits, and sometimes inconveniently hurried from their excess. The Mint might then have a supply of coins in advance, which, under the present practice, can never be the case; and depositors might receive the returns for their bullion, as soon as its value could be ascertained. Unfortunately, however, the law was rendered inefficient, in consequence of the advance to the depositor being charged with a discount of one-half per cent. which subjected him to a loss greater than that which would be occasioned by the average delay. I would respectfully suggest, therefore, the propriety of so changing the law, as to dispense hereafter with the charge upon the advance. The effect, as regards the Treasury, would be simply to make the national Mint the depository of a part of the public funds.

In entering upon my office, I felt it to be one of my first duties to endeavor to introduce such a change in the coinage as might make it a more creditable specimen of taste and art. In accomplishing this purpose, I have received the aid of some of our most distinguished artists, and one of the

engravers of the Mint, is now engaged in preparing a die, of the dollar size, for "the impression emblematic of liberty." In the course of the present year, I hope that our coinage will be placed upon an equality with the best now executed in Europe.

This occasion is perhaps a suitable one for urging the propriety of a change in our standards of gold and silver, which may give them uniformity and simplicity. At present, the standard of gold, expressed in its lowest terms, is 116 parts fine in 129; and that of silver, is 1,485 parts fine in 1,664. No reason is known to me in favor of retaining these complicated proportions, which do not correspond with each other, or with the standards of any other nation, and which, in the operations of the Mint, and the estimates of the value of foreign coins, give rise to calculations that are long and troublesome, and therefore liable to error. I would respectfully propose that the standard, both for gold and silver, be established at 900 parts of the pure metal in 1,000 of the standard. The change, with regard to the gold, would be scarcely appreciable, the present standard corresponding to 899.225 thousandths, so that if 900 were used, the weights of the gold coins might still be retained, without any sensible change in their value. Our present standard of silver is 892.428 thousandths, and is therefore more base than that proposed; but if, with the change of standard, the weight of the dollar be reduced from 416 grains to $412\frac{1}{2}$, the value will be exactly the same as before. It is proper to mention, that the proposed decimal standard is that of the French, who have employed it since the time of their revolution. The Spanish standard is 902 $\frac{1}{4}$ thousandths, but the Spanish American coins are generally below this, so as in fact to differ, in their average fineness, but little from 900. Now, a great portion of our silver deposits consists of these coins, and it would therefore be of great advantage to employ nearly the same standard. At present we are under the necessity of using large quantities of copper to reduce the bullion to our standard,—an operation by which the metal is rendered less malleable, and which subjects the depositor to a charge for alloy, in return for which he receives no valuable consideration.

Plans and specifications were carefully prepared here of the buildings for the branch mints at New Orleans, Charlotte, and Dahlonega; satisfactory contracts for their erection have been made; and they are now in progress under the superintendence of the commissioners appointed for that purpose. Contracts have also been entered into with skilful mechanics in Philadelphia, for making all the machinery for these mints after the most approved models. The cost of the buildings and machinery will be within the amount appropriated for these objects. With all the exertions that have been made, it will still be more than a year before the branch mints can be put into operation.

In the act establishing the branches of the mint, it is stated that each branch shall have "one assayer, one melter, and one refiner." The duties of melter and refiner have always been committed to the same officer in this Mint, and I cannot see any sufficient reason for separating them. Indeed, in the gold mints, the duties of assayer, melter, and refiner might be readily performed by one officer.

The same act provides for the appointment of the officers of the branch mints, "so soon as the necessary buildings are erected for the purpose of well conducting the business." I would respectfully submit the propriety

of so amending the act as to allow the appointments of chief coiner, assayer, and melter and refiner, to be made at an earlier period. I believe it will be impossible to find, in the country, persons qualified to enter at once upon the execution of these difficult offices, and it would certainly be imprudent to commit so important a matter, as the public coinage, into the hands of men uninstructed in the art, or of whose capacity no evidence had been given. If, however, the officers were appointed some time before their services were required, they might receive practical instruction in their several departments at the principal Mint, and thus be put in possession of the knowledge necessary for the successful performance of the duties to be afterwards entrusted to them.

I am, sir,

With deep respect,

Your faithful servant,

R. M. PATTERSON,

Director of the Mint.

To the PRESIDENT
of the *U*nited States.

SCHEDULE A.—Coinage of 1835.

	Pieces.	Pieces.	Dollars.	Dollars.
<i>Gold coins.</i>				
Half eagles -	371,534	502,936	1,857,670	2,186,175
Quarter eagles -	131,402		328,505	
<i>Silver coins.</i>				
Half dollars -	5,352,006	11,474,006	2,676,003	3,443,003
Quarter dollars -	1,952,000		488,000	
Dimes -	1,410,000		141,000	
Half dimes -	2,760,000		138,000	
<i>Copper coins.</i>				
Cents -	3,878,400	4,019,400	38,784	39,489
Half cents -	141,000		705	
Total -	-	15,996,342	-	5,668,667

SCHEDULE B.—Gold deposits at the Mint for 1835.

	Dollars.
Amount received in gold bullion of the United States -	698,500
Do. gold coins U. S. of old standard -	160,500
Do. from Europe -	745,800
Do. from Mexico and South America -	165,800
Do. from Africa -	57,900
Do. from Arabia -	1,900
Do. Jewellers' base gold -	14,600
Total of deposits -	1,845,000

SCHEDULE C.—Amount of Gold received annually from the Gold Region of the United States, from 1824 to 1835, inclusive.

	Virginia.	North Carolina.	South Carolina.	Georgia.	Tennessee.	Alabama.	Not ascertained.	Total.
1824	—	\$ 5,000	—	—	—	—	—	\$ 5,000
1825	—	17,000	—	—	—	—	—	17,000
1826	—	20,000	—	—	—	—	—	20,000
1827	—	21,000	—	—	—	—	—	21,000
1828	—	46,000	—	—	—	—	—	46,000
1829	\$ 2,500	134,000	\$ 3,500	—	—	—	—	140,000
1830	24,000	204,000	26,000	\$ 212,000	—	—	—	466,000
1831	26,000	294,000	22,000	176,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	—	520,000
1832	34,000	458,000	45,000	140,000	1,000	—	—	678,000
1833	104,000	475,000	66,000	216,000	7,000	—	—	868,000
1834	62,000	380,000	38,000	415,000	3,000	—	—	898,000
1835	60,400	263,500	42,400	319,900	100	—	12,200	698,500
	312,900	2,317,500	242,900	1,478,900	12,100	1,000	12,200	4,377,500

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
January 15, 1836.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit to you, herewith, some papers from the respective commissioners of the branch mints which are being built in North Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana, that will show you the progress made in the erection of those branches.

I am, sir,

With much consideration,

Your most obedient servant,

LEVI WOODBURY,

Secretary of the Treasury.

To the PRESIDENT of the *U. States.*

NEW ORLEANS, *November 20, 1835.*

SIR: I have had the honor to receive your communication of the 30th September, in which you request to be furnished with "a special report of what has been done in relation to the erection of the building for the branch of the Mint at New Orleans;" in compliance therewith, I beg leave, respectfully, to make the following report:

On the 19th day of June last past, the municipal authorities of the city of New Orleans conveyed to the United States, by notarial act passed before Felix de Armas, esq. notary public, a certain piece or parcel of land, situated in the city of New Orleans, and known as "Jackson square," immediately fronting the river Mississippi, for the express purpose of erecting thereon a branch of the Mint of the United States, which will more fully and at length appear, from a certified copy of the act of conveyance marked A, and herewith transmitted.

By this liberal and patriotic act, the United States became possessed of one of the most valuable squares of ground in the city, *without any cost to the Government*. The value of this donation has been estimated at little less than \$500,000.

Having thus acquired a valuable property, and its location combining many advantages, I lost no time in entering into a contract with Messrs. John Mitchell and Benjamin F. Fox, respectable mechanics of this city, to build the mint according to the plan drawn by Mr. Strickland, of Philadelphia, for the sum of \$182,000, a part, however, of the contemplated edifice, to wit, that portion intended for the coinage of silver, embracing one of the wings of the buildings, is, you will perceive from the contract, suspended for the present, the remaining portion of the building, consisting of the centre, and the other wing, as stipulated, to be finished on or before the 15th of May next, for and in consideration of the sum of \$142,000, payable in instalments, as the building progresses.

The first three instalments, amounting to the sum of \$53,250, will be paid during the present year, the fourth instalment will probably be payable early in the month of February next, and the balance of the contract will be required between that period and the time limited to complete the building, to wit, 15th of May next. On the 22d of August the contract was

signed, and made a matter of record before Joseph Cuyillieur, esq. notary public in this city, and duly recorded in the office of the recorder of mortgages; for the particulars and conditions of the contract, I beg leave to refer to it, which was transmitted in my letter of the 25th of August, since which, the contractors for erecting the building have been busily engaged thereon, and at this time they have nearly finished the whole of the walls to the height of the first story. Some delay has taken place, in consequence of being disappointed in receiving the stone for the basement story, and northern brick for the arches. The first is now daily expected, and some further delay may be anticipated in respect to the latter; this, however, is a matter of little consequence, as the walls will have sufficient time to settle.

It is believed that that the whole of the second story will be finished on or before the first day of January next, and the third story, together with the roof, finished on or about the 15th of February, and I have not the least doubt but that the building will be completed according to the contract, and ready for operation by the time stipulated.

This report would have been made you at an earlier day, but has been delayed for some time, under the expectation of the arrival of the different materials ordered by the contractors from Philadelphia and New York, which would have enabled me to have given you more information in detail, respecting the progress of the building.

I have the honor also to transmit, herewith, a plan or sketch of the city of New Orleans, from which you will perceive the situation selected for the establishment of the Mint, also a sketch or plan of the foundations of the building, together with the dimensions of the square of ground, the first marked B and the latter C; all of which are respectfully submitted. I expect to have the pleasure of seeing you in Washington a few days after the receipt hereof.

With sentiments of great regard and esteem,

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

MARTIN GORDON, SEN.

To the Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

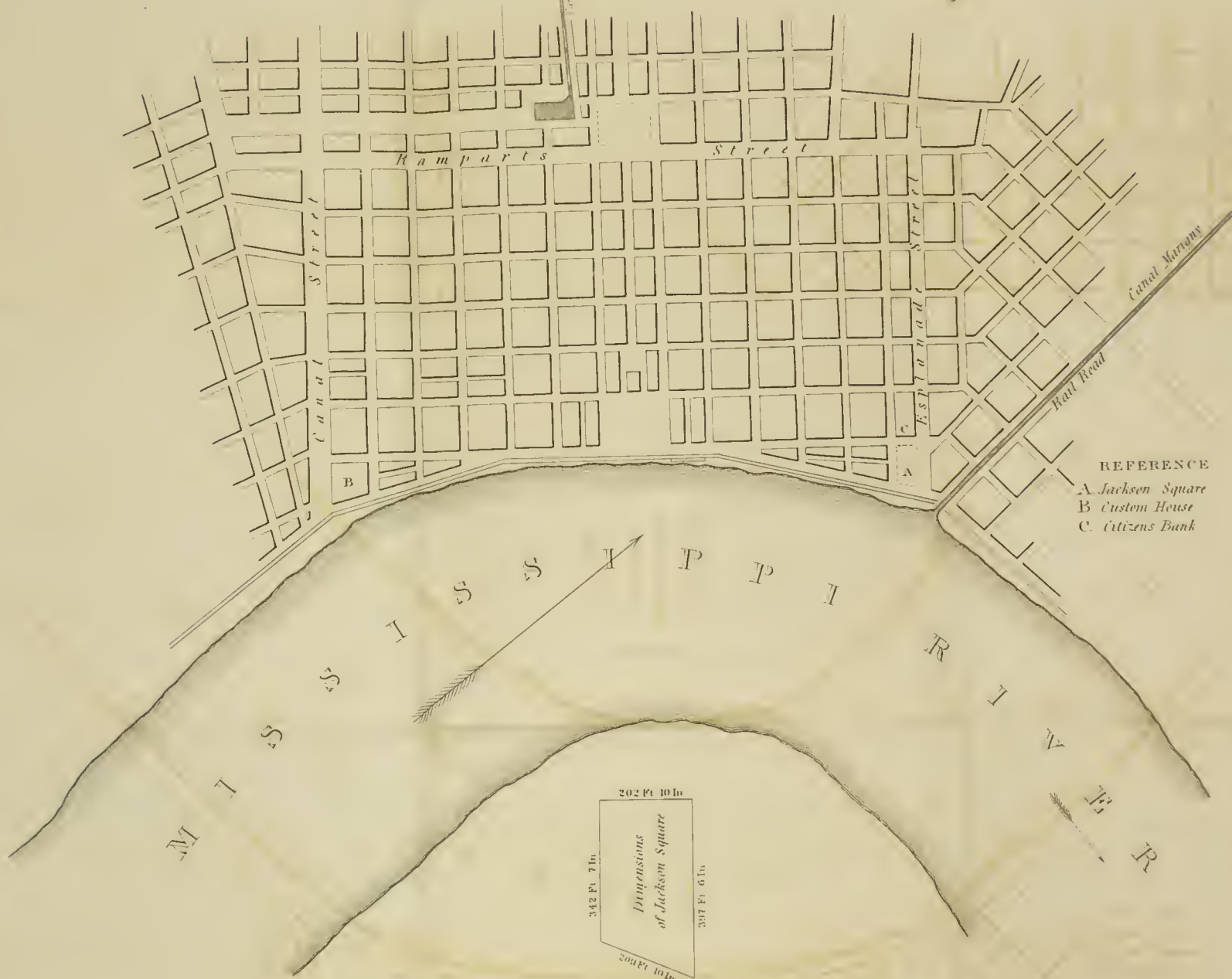
Secretary of the Treasury.

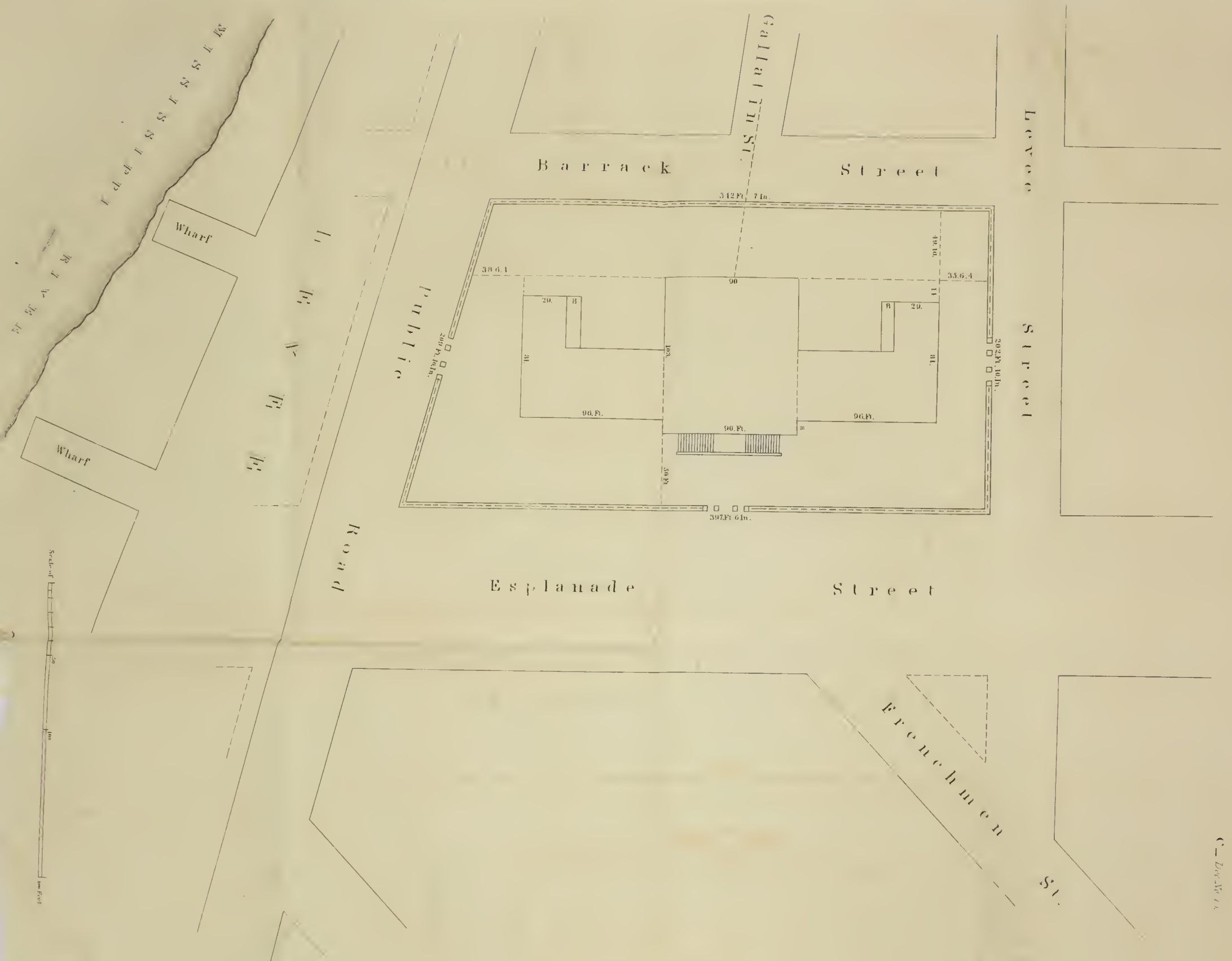
A.

In the city of New Orleans, in the State of Louisiana, this nineteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five, and in the fifty-ninth year of the independence of the United States of America, before me, Felix de Armas, notary public, duly commissioned and sworn, in and for the said city and parish, and in the presence of the undersigned witnesses, personally came and appeared the honorable Denis Prieur, mayor of this city, herein acting for, and in behalf of, the corporation of the mayor, aldermen, and inhabitants, of the city of New Orleans, by virtue of a resolution of the City Council, adopted at their sitting of the 9th of May, last past, and approved on the eleventh day of the same month, (a certified copy whereof is hereto attached, for reference.) of the one part, and Martin Gordon, Esq. of this city, aforesaid, herein acting for, and in behalf of, these United States, as commissioner, appointed by authority of

PLAN SKETCH OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

B — Dec No 70.







the said United States, with power to superintend the erection and building of a branch of the Mint of the said United States, to be located in this city, of the other part :

Whereas, by the said resolution, it was resolved that the use of the square of ground, now enclosed and known as Jackson square, situated in this city, and bounded as follows, to wit, by Esplanade street, Barracks street, Levee street, and the public road, be ceded to the United States, for the express and only purpose of erecting thereon a branch of the Mint of the United States, together with the necessary appendages ; and that the mayor be, and he is, authorized to convey, by notarial act, to the said Martin Gordon, Esq. the commissioner appointed by authority of the said United States to superintend the erecting and building of the said Mint, the use and occupation of said square, for the purposes aforesaid.

It was further resolved, that should it hereafter be deemed necessary by the Government of the United States to remove the Mint, contemplated to be established as aforesaid, or to cease to occupy it for such purposes, then the said act to be null and void.

And it was further resolved, that the resolution adopted on the 25th day of April last, on the same subject, be and is repealed.

And whereas the said resolution has met with the approbation of the said Martin Gordon, Esq. commissioner as aforesaid :

Now, therefore, the said honorable Denis Prieur, mayor as aforesaid, in execution of the said resolution, does, by these presents, convey to the said Martin Gordon, Esq. commissioner as aforesaid, the use of the square of ground, now enclosed and known as Jackson square, situated in this city of New Orleans, and bounded as follows, to wit : by Esplanade street, Barracks street, Levee street, and the public road. This conveyance, thus made to the United States of the use of the said square, being for the express and only purpose of erecting upon the said square a branch of the Mint of the United States, together with the necessary appendages.

Provided however, That should it hereafter be deemed necessary by the Government of the United States to remove the Mint, contemplated to be established as aforesaid, or to cease to occupy it for such purposes, then this act to be null and void.

This conveyance is hereby accepted by the said M. Gordon, Esq. commissioner as aforesaid, in behalf of the United States.

Done and passed at the city of New Orleans aforesaid, in my office, the day, month, and year first above written, in presence of Messrs. Amedée Ducatel and Alphonse Morel, competent witnesses, who have hereunto set their hands, together with the parties and me, the said notary, after reading the whole.

This act is in conformity with the resolution of the City Council of May 9th ultimo, and approved on the 11th id. and is approved. New Orleans. June 19th, 1835.

GEO. EUSTIS,
Attorney of the Corporation.

MARTIN GORDON.
D. PRIEUR, *Mayor.*

AMEDEE DUCATEL.

A. MOREL.

FELIX DE ARMAS, *Notary Public.*

I do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the original, on file in my office. In faith whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and affixed the seal of my office, at the city of New Orleans, aforesaid, the day, month and year first above written.

[L. S.]

FELIX DE ARMAS,
Notary Public.

[See Plates B and C.]

MAYORALTY OF NEW ORLEANS—CITY COUNCIL.

Sitting of Saturday, May 9th, 1835 :

Resolved, That the use of the square of ground, now enclosed and known as Jackson square, situated in the city of New Orleans, and bounded as follows, to wit: by Esplanade street, Barracks street, Levee street, and the public road, be ceded to the United States, for the express and only purpose of erecting thereon a branch of the Mint of the United States, together with the necessary appendages ; and that the Mayor be, and is hereby, authorized to convey, by notarial act, to Martin Gordon, Esq. the commissioner appointed, by the authority of the said United States, to superintend the erection and building of the said Mint, the use and occupation of said square, for the purposes aforesaid.

Be it further resolved, That should it hereafter be deemed necessary by the Government of the United States to remove the Mint, contemplated to be established as aforesaid, or to cease to occupy it for such purposes, then the said act to be null and void.

Be it further resolved. That the resolution adopted on the 25th day of April last, on the same subject, be, and the same is hereby, repealed.

JN. CULBERTSON, *Recorder.*

Approved, May 11th, 1835 :

D. PRIEUR, *Mayor.*

A true copy :

CHIARD, Jun. *Secretary.*

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the voucher annexed to an act executed before me, the undersigned notary, dated the 19th day of June instant, purporting to be a conveyance by the City Corporation of New Orleans to the Government of the United States.

In faith whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and affixed the seal of my office at New Orleans aforesaid, this 19th day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty five, and of the independence of the United States of America the 59th.

[L. S.]

FELIX DE ARMAS,
Notary Public.

ATHENS, GEORGIA, Nov. 13, 1835.

SIR : In conformity with your instructions, I herewith present a statement of the progress made in erecting the edifice designed for the use of the branch of the United States Mint at Dahlonega, in this State, and an estimate of what probably will be accomplished during the present year. My report is brief, but I suppose it contains all the facts which it is necessary that I should state.

I have just learned that Col. Banks, who holds a memorandum given by me to Mr. Worley, (from whom the lot in Dahlonga was purchased) has sent it to the Treasury Department for payment. He received it from Mr. Worley, in payment of a debt, and being unacquainted with the proper course, transmitted the memorandum by the honorable Jabez Jackson, without apprising me that it was in his possession; he has been informed that it will be paid whenever it is presented to me, and will recal it for that purpose.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

IGNATIUS A. FEW.

HON. LEVI WOODBURY.

ATHENS, GEORGIA, Nov. 13, 1835.

The commissioner appointed to superintend the erection of the edifice designed for the use of the branch of the United States Mint at Dahlonga, Lumpkin county, Georgia, reports: That he purchased a lot containing ten acres, adjoining the town of Dahlonga, for \$1,050, in the month of August last, having selected it in the early part of May; that he received a plan and elevation of the building, on the 4th of August, from the Treasury Department, and immediately thereafter advertised for proposals from contractors; that the 22d September last was appointed to receive them, and on that day eight persons presented proposals for the contract, which was taken by Mr. Benjamin Towns, one of the eight, (his being the lowest offer,) for the sum of \$33,450; the edifice to be completed by the 22d day of March, 1837, and a bond for the performance of the contract, with a penalty of \$66,900, was signed by the contractor and Dr. James Tinsley and Col. John A. Cobb, all of Athens, Georgia. The contractor expects, during the present year, to be able to have the cellars and the foundations dug out, and a part of the stone quarried and prepared for laying the foundations, also to collect wood for his brick-kilns, and procure a part of the lumber. His operations, during the ensuing winter, will be chiefly confined to the preparation of his materials, that he may be enabled to commence laying the foundations, and burning the brick with the opening of the spring. All which is respectfully submitted

IGNATIUS A. FEW,

Commissioner for superintending erection of Branch Mint, &c.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, Nov. 2, 1835.

SIR: In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 30th of September, I have the honor to submit herewith the undermentioned statements: 1st. I have purchased a site for the branch mint, in the town of Charlotte, North Carolina, containing eight lots; a full square, containing near four acres of land, for the sum of \$1,500. Deeds for this property are executed to the United States by William Carson and F. L. Smith, of whom I purchased the property. I will forward the deeds to you as soon as I can get them recorded and registered, which will be on the fourth Monday of this month, the time our quarterly court will be in session. Deeds in this State can only be recorded during the session of court, which will delay the forwarding of them until after that time.

2d. After due advertisement in the Charlotte Journal, Washington Globe, Richmond Enquirer, and the North Carolina Standard, to receive proposals for the erection of the building for the branch mint at Charlotte, North Carolina, according to a plan and details furnished me by the Director of the Mint, Philadelphia, and approved by yourself, I awarded and let the contract to Messrs. Perry and Ligon, of Raleigh, North Carolina, on the 15th day of October last, at the sum of \$29,800; their proposal being several thousand dollars less than any other proposal made. I have no doubt, from the character of these men as builders, that the work will be done in the best manner, and completed in the time agreed upon, which is the 1st day of January, 1837.

3d. I have reserved to myself, as commissioner in behalf of the United States, the right of examining all the materials as they are delivered by the undertakers, and accept or reject them as I may think proper; also the right of examining the work as it progresses, and suffer none to be put up only in the best manner. The undertakers are to receive payment from time to time, in proportion to the materials delivered and work done, three-fourths of the value thereof, the balance when the building is completed.

4th. I think that \$6,000 will be sufficient to pay the purchase of the site and all other expenses for furnishing materials, up to the 1st day of January, 1836; the balance for the erecting the building will be required from time to time as the work in erecting the building progresses.

5th. The Director of the Mint, Philadelphia, has informed me that the machinery necessary for the branch mint at Charlotte, North Carolina, will be ready in due time to have put up before the building is completed. The machinery, it is supposed, will cost \$15,000. I think the appropriation by Congress will be amply sufficient to cover all expenses in the purchase of site, erection of the building, machinery, &c. And perhaps there may be enough saved out of the appropriation to enclose the ground for the site, &c.

If not, I hope Congress will make an appropriation to enclose the site with iron railing. All of which is respectfully submitted by

Your obedient servant,

SAM. McCOMB,

Commissioner of the Branch Mint, Charlotte, N. C.

HON. LEVI WOODBURY,

Secretary of the Treasury.